

**Wildlife Restoration OPERATING GRANT
FINAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

**Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Wildlife Restoration Grant**

GRANT NUMBER: AKW-25

PROJECT TITLE: Basic Hunter Education Section 4c FY2018

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE: July 1, 2017-June 30, 2018

REPORT DUE DATE: September 1, 2018

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Ginamaria Smith, Program Coordinator II

I. PROGRESS ON PROJECT OBJECTIVES DURING PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

OBJECTIVE 1:

Program Administration, Coordination, & Enhancement

Provide program administration and coordination for all HIT Program certification courses and other outdoor programs designed to recruit and retain new hunters into the shooting sports and to preserve our hunter heritage. Adopt, maintain, evaluate, and update the certification course curricula, including course materials and teaching aids. Review instructor policy and teaching manuals and update when necessary. Manage a database to accurately track volunteer in-kind match hours and documentation.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

-HIT Program staff worked closely with Kalkomey and NBEF to develop an online crossbow education course. Instructor trainings were conducted around the state and 65 instructors were certified. The online course went live on January 1, 2018 and in FY18 114 students were certified. Additional equipment was purchased for the course to ensure a good experience for students and to aid instructors. After the first full year of courses is complete, HIT Program staff plan to evaluate the course and update any teaching manuals or course curricula if necessary based on student surveys and instructor input.

-The HIT Program Coordinator worked closely with Admin staff to ensure in-kind hours were tracked correctly and used as match. The HIT Project Assistant input all timesheet data, followed up with instructors to ensure proper completion of time forms, and maintained the in-kind hour database.

-Alaska hosted the IHEA-USA Conference in June 2018. The HIT Program Coordinator worked closely with the IHEA-USA Board and staff to develop the speaker line-up, coordinate the conference location, and develop a conservation day designed to provide programming for conference attendees around hunter education, the shooting sports, and preserving our hunter heritage. The annual conference is a chance for hunter ed professionals to network, learn about updates and opportunities on evolving topics related to hunter education, and attend the annual IHEA-USA business meeting. It is also a chance for the host state to showcase their hunter

education and shooting sports programs. Conference attendees included representatives from 33 state fish and game agencies and four international agencies (Australia, Mexico, Guam, and Ontario). With grant funding, the travel and conference fees were paid so all HIT Program staff, the Steering Group, the three 2017 Instructor of the Year awardees, and four volunteer instructors could attend.

-The HIT Program Coordinator worked with staff to review all forms used by instructors in the certification courses. Dates were added at the bottom so everyone will use the most updated form and these forms were organized and made available to all instructors through the instructor website.

-HIT Program staff met in February in-person to ensure all staff were on the same page in regard to program administration and coordination. Staff gave updates on accomplishments in their regions and in-depth discussions were had regarding upcoming changes, challenges, etc.

-The Steering Group met via teleconference twice during this reporting period and once in person at the IHEA-USA Conference. The Steering Group provided advice to HIT staff from an instructor’s standpoint and were instrumental in helping with activities at the conference.

The actual expenditures spent per budget category on this objective are below:

1000-Staff time	\$177,362.33
2000-Travel	\$23,547.87
3000-Contractual	\$27,172.42
4000-Supplies	\$19,297.74
Total	\$247,380.36

OBJECTIVE 2:

Volunteer Instructor Recruitment & Training

Recruit and maintain an active instructor roster to address the demand for certification courses and ensure courses are offered statewide. Identify the specific areas throughout the state that need instructors and conduct “target recruiting” efforts in those locations. Provide continued education training, evaluation (by HIT staff and students), and incentives/recognition for volunteer instructors. Manage a database to accurately track all volunteer instructors.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

-160 volunteer instructors were certified statewide from 37 different cities/villages. We are able to increase the number of classes offered statewide because of the help of our new instructors.

-4 ADF&G staff from around the state were certified as volunteer instructors so they can answer questions about the HIT Program, assist with scheduling classes in their area, and instruct classes when available. All HIT Program staff were trained as crossbow ed instructors.

-9 government agency staff (Fish & Wildlife Service, Alaska State Troopers, Bureau of Land Management) from around the state were certified as volunteer instructors so they can answer questions about the HIT Program and instruct classes when available.

-HIT Program staff met with instructors in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Palmer, and Soldotna for annual planning meetings. These meetings allowed face-to-face time with the instructors so instructors could give feedback on the program and also so HIT Program staff could thank the volunteers. These meetings also help HIT Program staff assess instructor’s needs, community needs, and form a plan for the following year’s courses.

- A 15-year service pin was designed and purchased in FY18 and was presented at annual meetings so all instructors got a chance to recognize other instructors' accomplishments.
- A quarterly newsletter was mailed out to every active instructor statewide. The newsletter contained information about policy changes, pertinent class information, and also stories of activities/classes/workshops that highlighted some of the programs offered statewide.
- Uniform shirts for instructors were purchased to ensure the professionalism of the HIT Program.
- The Program Technician maintained and updated all instructor records upon receipt of the annual volunteer service agreement forms and firearms assurance forms required by state risk management policies.
- Each year the top volunteer instructors are recognized by statewide awards with nominations made by co-instructors. The HIT Program Steering Group helped to choose the top volunteer instructors. This past year's recipients included Ed Bosco of Anchorage as Hunter Education Instructor of the Year, Robert Marshall of Palmer as Muzzleloader Education Instructor of the Year, and Jonathan Lanier of Eielson Air Force Base as Outstanding Educator of the Year.

The actual expenditures spent per budget category in this fiscal year are below:

1000-Staff time	\$191,425.57
2000-Travel	\$32,575.46
3000-Contractual	\$12,765.53
4000-Supplies	\$18,217.44
Total	\$254,984.00

OBJECTIVE 3:
Student Recruitment & Training

Conduct hunter education, bowhunter education, and muzzleloader education certification courses throughout the state. Manage a database to accurately track all certification course students.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- 6,834 hours of volunteer effort provided 207,675.00 of in-kind match. Since additional hours were tabulated above the original amount included in the grant request, the amount of in-kind match used in FY19 will be increased.
- Purchased hunter education student manuals and workbooks, ammunition for the proficiency shoots, orange safety vests, and earplugs and safety glasses for each student completing the certification courses.
- Provided utilities for the hunter education facility at the Rabbit Creek Shooting Park in Anchorage where a majority of the HIT Program courses and activities are taught.
- The following table reports the number of certification courses offered and the number of students certified in each certification course discipline.

Discipline	Classes	Number of Students Certified
Hunter Education	165	2,337
Bowhunter Education	64	596
Muzzleloader Education	23	122
Crossbow Education	16	114
Totals	268	3,169

-The following table reports the number of students in age/gender/race/disabled categories, as determined by the volunteer instructors.

Discipline	Female	AK Native	African-American	Oriental	Hispanic	Disabled
Hunter Education	788	193	21	81	41	19
Bowhunter Education	52	13	2	5	5	3
Muzzleloader Education	9	0	1	1	1	0
Crossbow Education	10	0	1	0	0	1
Totals	859	206	25	87	47	23

The actual expenditures spent per budget category in this fiscal year are below:

1000-Staff time	\$190,186.28
2000-Travel	\$2,006.57
3000-Contractual	\$37,567.26
4000-Supplies	\$73,307.61
Total	\$303,067.72

OBJECTIVE 4:

Program Outreach

Recruit, retain, and reactivate hunters and shooting sports enthusiasts. Offer certification courses, clinics, and workshops in remote locations. Offer skill development in hunting and shooting sports to women, youth, and families. Partner with outdoor-related education programs and organizations to promote the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to be a responsible hunter and shooter.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- The HIT Program offered clinics and training opportunities to 800 participants. Most of the participants were connected to the Becoming an Outdoors Woman (BOW) Program. Clinics offered included: Sighting In Day, waterfowl hunting, bear hunting, shotgun basics, archery, firearm cleaning, rifle shooting basics, sheep hunting, handguns, bear safety, and beaver trapping.
- HIT Program staff and volunteers offered a “Women’s Only” clinic series in Fairbanks based on public requests. Attendance was favorable and there are plans to increase the series in FY19.
- The HIT Program collaborated with the Alaska State Troopers and their CSI Camp. 84 students came to a hunter education and firearm safety day at the range. The students learned firearm safety rules, how to shoot rifles and shotguns, and the anatomy of Alaskan game animals.
- Two sessions of the Outdoor Youth Days Camp were offered to 60 participants ranging from 10-14 years old. The participants learned about firearms safety, archery, rifle shooting, shotgun shooting, wildlife ID, fishing, orienteering, and outdoor survival skills during the three-day camp.
- An R3 Coordinator was hired in December 2017 to facilitate a structured outreach effort and develop new and sustainable outreach strategies. The R3 Coordinator developed a list of all on-going R3 programs organized by the division and attended the first R3 Conference in Nebraska.

-HIT staff provided an informational booth at the following events in order to interact and encourage discussion with the public.

- Great Alaskan Sportsman Show-Laser Shot Electronic Shooting System (15,000 people)
- Mat-Su Valley Sportsman Show-Laser Shot Electronic Shooting System (2,500 people)
- Potter Marsh Discovery Days (800 people)

-A reprint of the Hunt Alaska publication was completed so this great educational resource can be distributed to students in the certification classes, clinic attendees, and at outreach events.

The actual expenditures spent per budget category in this fiscal year are below:

1000-Staff time	\$ 184,749.89
2000-Travel	\$ 3,128.65
3000-Contractual	\$ 22,735.78
4000-Supplies	\$ 17,352.32
Total	\$ 227,966.64

II. SUMMARY OF WORK COMPLETED ON PROJECT TO DATE.

This is an annual grant with similar objectives and results completed each year. The objectives are designed to run the HIT Program which will result in safer, better informed, and more prepared resource users. The training of students in firearm safety reduces hunting incidents and the curricula regarding ethics, conservation, and wildlife management assist in reducing game violations.

Based on our records, the HIT Program has certified 1,411 instructors and currently has 514 active instructors. To date, the HIT Program through the Section 4c grant has certified the following number of students:

Discipline	
Hunter Education	32,538
Bowhunter Education	12,206
Muzzleloader Education	2,945
Crossbow Education	114
Total	47,803

IV. PUBLICATIONS

- Alaska Fish & Wildlife News-February 2018
Crossbows in Alaska
http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=wildlifeneews.view_article&articles_id=850
- Alaska Fish & Wildlife News-August 2018
International Hunter Education Association Annual Conference Comes to Alaska
http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=wildlifeneews.view_article&articles_id=878

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THIS PROJECT

AKW-25 is a year-long grant, however it's an ongoing annual project, so the recommendation is for continuation. In FY19, due to the ability to access additional federal funds with in-kind volunteer match hours, we plan to add an additional objective which will allow us to develop and complete maintenance on hunter education facilities.

Date: August 2018